NASA Facts

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center
Houston, Texas 77058

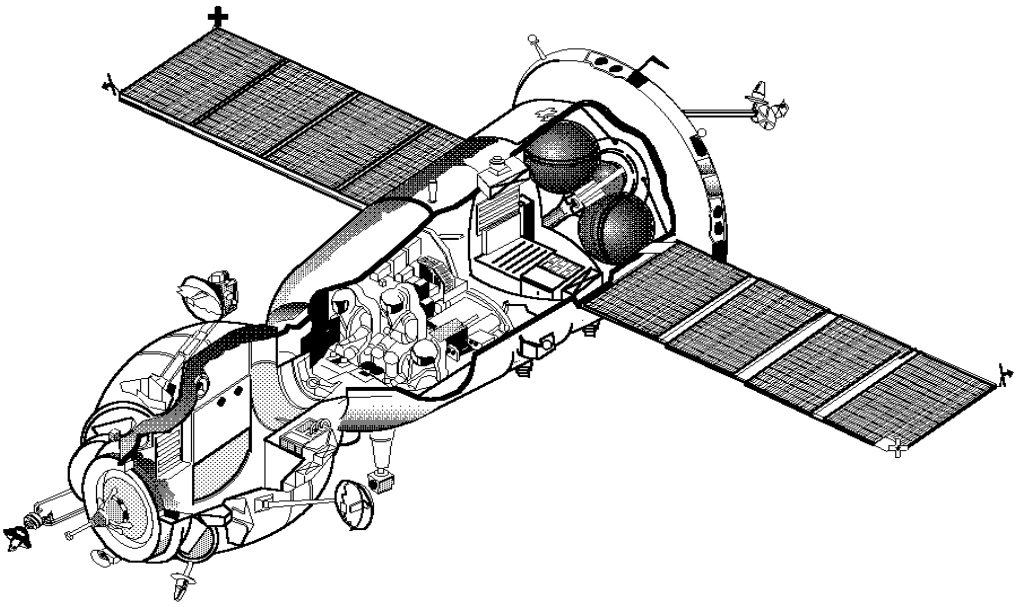
International Space Station **March 1998**

Flight 2R: *First Crew On the International Space Station*

In early 1999, an international crew of three will begin living aboard the International Space Station, starting a permanent human presence aboard the outpost. The crew has been in training for the mission since late 1996 and includes International Space Station Commander Bill Shepherd, a U.S. astronaut; Soyuz Commander Yuri Gidzenko, a Russian cosmonaut; and Flight Engineer Sergei Krikalev, also a Russian cosmonaut.

The first crew will spend five months aboard the International Space Station. When they arrive, the station will consist of three modules: the Russian Service Module, which will serve as living quarters and onboard control center for the early station; the U.S.-funded and Russian-built Control Module or Functional Cargo Block (FGB), a module that provides supplementary power and propulsion functions; and the U.S.-built Node 1, a connecting module that provides the attachment points for future U.S. segments.

The crew's mission will be a flight test of the new station as they assist with critical assembly activities from onboard. During their stay, three Space Shuttle assembly missions will dock, expanding the station by delivering the first truss-based U.S. solar



The first International Space Station crew will launch on a Soyuz spacecraft in January 1999

arrays, the U.S. Laboratory Module and the station's primary robotic arm, built by Canada.

The crew will be launched on a Russian Soyuz spacecraft from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazahkstan. They will return at the end of their mission aboard the Space Shuttle on assembly flight 6A, the mission that delivers the robotic arm. They will be relieved by a new crew of three that will be launched on the shuttle on flight 6A. The Soyuz spacecraft the first crew rides to orbit will remain docked with the station, providing an emergency return to Earth for crew members if needed. The Soyuz spacecraft attached to the station will be changed out with a fresh spacecraft about each six months to maintain the emergency crew return capability.

Shepherd, Gidzenko and Krikalev are training during alternating stays in both Star City, Russia, and in the U.S. All three are veteran space flyers.

Crew Biographies

William M. (Bill) Shepherd, 47, Capt., USN, will serve as the International Space Station Commander. Selected as an astronaut by NASA in 1984, Shepherd considers Babylon, N.Y., his hometown and will be making his fourth space flight. Shepherd served as deputy manager for the International Space Station Program from 1993 to 1996, prior to his assignment to command the first flight crew. His Space Shuttle flights include mission STS-27 in December 1988; STS-41 in October 1990; and STS-52 in October 1992. He has logged more than 440 hours in space.

Yuri Pavlovich Gidzenko, 35, Lt. Col., Air Force Russia, will serve as the Soyuz Commander. Gidzenko began his training as a Russian cosmonaut in 1989. He was born in the village of Elanets, Elanetsky district, Nikolayev region, Russia, and will be making his second space flight. Gidzenko commanded the Euromir-95 mission aboard the Mir Space Station from September 1995 to February 1996. He has logged more than 180 days in space.

Sergei Konstantinovich Krikalev, 38, will serve as the Flight Engineer. Selected as a Russian cosmonaut in 1985, Krikalev was born in Leningrad (renamed St. Petersburg), Russia, and he will be making his fourth space flight. He first flew as flight engineer on the second joint Soviet-French science mission aboard the Mir Space Station from November 1988 to April 1989. He next flew as flight engineer on the ninth Mir mission from May 1991 to March 1992. In February 1994, Krikalev became the first cosmonaut to fly on the Space Shuttle on mission STS-60, the first joint U.S.-Russian shuttle flight. He has logged more than 1 year and three months in space, including seven spacewalks.